REMARKS

Claims 1 – 36 are pending in the application and stand rejected. Applicants have amended Claims 1-14, 17 and 26 and respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims.

Claims 1 and 17 stand rejected under Section 102 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,734,724 issued to Kinoshita. Claim 26 stands rejected under Section 103 as being unpatentable over Kinoshita in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,008,838 to Iizawa and U.S. Patent No. 4,558,180 issued to Scordo. Claim 34 stands rejected under Section 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,883,944 issued to Burke in view of Scordo.

Kinoshita discloses an audio communications control unit that switches left and right channel audio signals to reproduce the audio channels at a terminal.

Iizawa discloses a mulit-point control unit (MCU) that switches audio signals involved in a single video conference.

Scordo discloses a programmable audio mixer for mixing conference locations with matrix multiplication.

Burke discloses a plug and play telephone system that allocates telephone system resources, such as intercom numbers, through a peer-to-peer network.

Claim 1 as amended recites, in part, "receiving audio signals from communications terminals at a centralized location having pooled digital signal processing resources assigning a portion of the pooled resources to each audio signal."

Claim 17 as amended recites, in part, "a signal processing (SP) module having digital signal processing resources for performing signal processing on the received audio signals under direction of the CSM to produce processed audio signals, the CSM operable to assign audio signals to the digital signal processing resources."
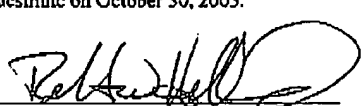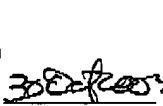
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Claim 26 as amended recites, in part, "a centralized signal processing (SP) module for performing SP on the audio signals received from the plurality of distributed communications terminals responsive to the room models associated with the communications terminals from which the audio signals were received, to produce processed audio signals."

Claim 34 recites, in part, "responsive to determining that the distributed communications terminal is active, allocating a portion of the central pool of signal processing resources to processing a signal from the communications terminal."
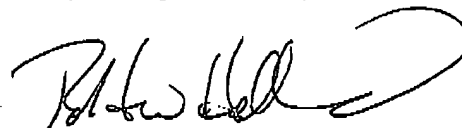
Applicants respectfully submit that Kinoshita, Iizawa, Scordo and Burke cannot anticipate or make obvious Applicants' claimed invention because these references fail to teach, disclose or suggest all elements recited by independent claims 1, 17, 26 and 34. For instance, Kinoshita, Iizawa, Scordo and Burke fail to teach, disclose or suggest a centralized pool of signal processing resources allocated to audio signals of distributed communications terminals. Burke, which the Examiner applies to reject Claim 34 as sharing signal processing resources, discloses peer-to-peer management of communications terminals, such as assigning an intercom number, but fails to disclose a central pool of resources to perform signal processing on audio signals. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that all of pending Claims 1-36 are allowable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is solicited. Nonetheless, should any issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, the examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being sent via facsimile on October 30, 2003.

_____ _____
Attorney for Applicant(s)   Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,

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Reg. No. 40,020

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